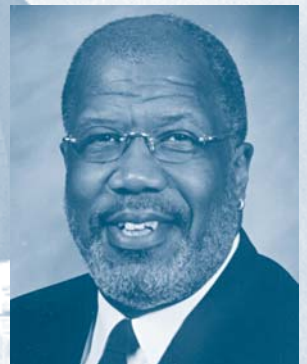


State Representative Charlie Brown

Helping Hoosier Families

113th Indiana General Assembly, Spring 2004

Session Report



Childhood Obesity



Fighting Abuses



Job Creation





113th General Assembly Ends

Dear Friends,

The 2004 short session of the Indiana General Assembly has ended. I have detailed several important pieces of legislation in this newsletter, including childhood obesity and increased access to affordable prescription drugs.

I hope you find this information useful, and I will keep you updated over the next few months on other legislation that should have a positive impact on you and your family. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns about state government.

Sincerely,



Brown Fights Childhood Obesity

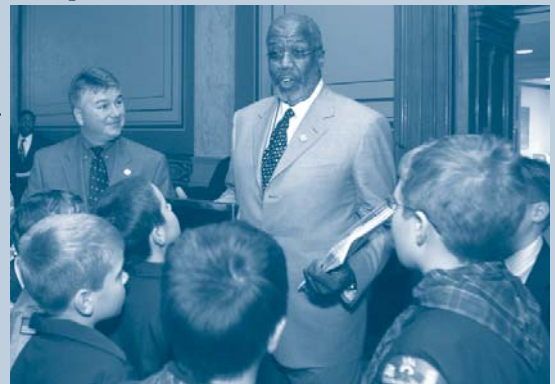
This year I authored House Bill 1014 which would require the department of education to develop recommendations for school corporation nutritional policies and curricula and model policies for the measurement of student body mass indexes.

The bill also would have prohibited vending machines at elementary schools from being accessible to students and would have required that healthy foods and beverages account for 50% of the food and beverage sales in middle and high schools.

While this bill did not pass during session, I will continue to work during the next session for fighting childhood obesity.

In Indiana a recent survey showed that more than one-third of students in grades 4, 8 and 11 were overweight. Fewer than three in 10 students in grade 11 reported having a physical education class. Overweight children are more likely than normal-weight children to exhibit risk factors for heart disease.

Legislators continue to strive to improve academic achievements. I feel we should work to broaden our scope to include quality of life training.



What schools could do to fight childhood obesity

There are several policies that schools could implement to make an immediate and positive difference in the health-related decision-making of children:

- limiting the sale and consumption of snack foods and soft drinks throughout the day but particularly during lunchtime;
- enhancing the nutritional content of foods served at schools during breakfast and lunch periods;
- adding more nutritional education and training for students and teachers alike;
- ensuring that student time spent in physical education and physical activity is high-quality time that actually improves cardiovascular health;
- encouraging the promotion of recess as a time for improving physical fitness rather than treating it as a time for competitive games.

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Medication Savings

Hoosiers Gain Access to Affordable Prescription Drugs

Legislators also worked hard to protect Hoosiers from the rising costs of prescription drugs. Under a plan approved this session, more than **400,000 Hoosiers would gain access**

to affordable prescription drugs, with many more qualifying in years to come.

House Bill 1265 enables the state to set up an aggregate prescription drug purchasing program to negotiate the prices of prescription drugs from pharmaceutical companies. **Indiana will also be able to enter into joint purchasing agreements with other states, gaining added bargaining power.**

People who sign up for the program will get a prescription drug card to receive the savings when they fill their prescriptions at their local drugstores. This is a pilot program which, if successful, will be extended in the future.



Fighting Drug, Alcohol Abuse

Lawmakers spent time this session trying to come up with real solutions to the problems brought on by the abuse of drugs and alcohol throughout Indiana. Among the most prominent concerns was the new wave of production and use of methamphetamine sweeping through the state. Criminals favor this drug because of its low cost, simple manufacture and easy accessibility.

Another major problem the legislators resolved to face was the occurrence of drunk driving on Hoosier roadways.

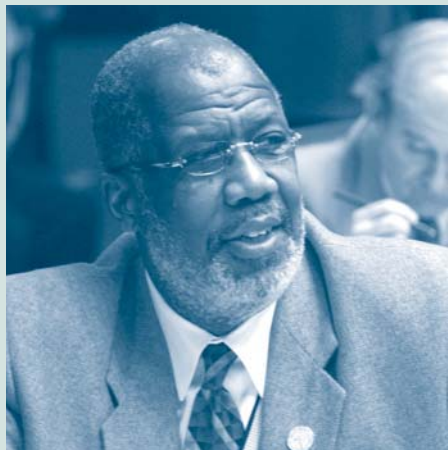
House Bill 1136 creates a task force to combat the production, distribution and use of methamphetamine in Indiana. The task force will suggest specific actions to lessen the demand and decrease the supply of meth, improve the enforcement of meth laws, and evaluate the success of programs in other states to make recommendations for improving local, state and federal laws regarding meth in Indiana.

House Bill 1264 is aimed at keeping drunk drivers off the road. It requires an ignition interlock system, which works by screening a driver's breath in order to start the vehicle, be installed in a repeat offender's vehicle. The system will detect if a driver attempts to start the vehicle by circumventing the breath test. The system will then lock the auto down for a predetermined period of time.

House Bill 1394 charges anyone 21 years of age or older with a Class B felony for causing the death of another person while operating a vehicle under the influence of drugs or alcohol. In addition, anyone who operates a vehicle under the influence, and with at least one passenger under the age of 18, will be charged with a Class D felony. Anyone with two convictions of causing death while intoxicated and operating a vehicle will have their license suspended for life.



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Representative Charlie Brown listens to legislative debate in the chamber of the House of Representatives.

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Creating Hoosier Jobs

Protecting and creating Hoosier jobs and businesses were among the issues of most concern in the 2004 General Assembly. Three bills and a resolution were passed that will aid in the retention and creation of jobs as well as encourage business development and corporate responsibility.

House Resolution 47 calls on the president and Congress to address a growing trade imbalance that has resulted in the loss of more than 2 million manufacturing jobs in the U.S. since 2001. It asks that **trade agreements require that corporations pay fair and competitive wages**, respect the rights of workers to unionize, and adopt workplace safety and anti-pollution standards equal to those in our country. The resolution also encourages the federal government to **provide economic incentives to sectors that have seen record job losses** due to NAFTA, and address the adverse effects on trade caused by countries that artificially lower the value of their currency relative to the dollar.

House Bill 1080 will help **stimulate Indiana's economy** by providing a price preference to Indiana businesses for public works and procurement contracts. This piece of legislation will focus on Indiana companies first as suppliers for goods and services the state is interested in purchasing.

House Bill 1434 will **benefit low-income businesses by fostering economic development opportunities** by providing grants for training and technical assistance. The microenterprise partnership program created under the bill will provide assistance to businesses with fewer than five employees.

House Bill 1365 will make the state's research and development tax credit permanent, extend the life of the Hoosier Business Investment Tax Credit and create a new fund to encourage investment in new technology. It also calls for a study of **eliminating corporate tax loopholes in current Indiana law** that cause tax increases on Hoosier homeowners and businesses.

**House Bill 1080
will focus on
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Rep. Charlie Brown

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